

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

BY GEORGE HOUSTON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Account of the ancient fathers, continued.—CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. This father, so far from agreeing with Irenæus as to the age of Jesus Christ, affirms, as the later fathers generally do, that he preached but one year, and died, (Stromat. 1, page 407, edit. oxon. Tertullian adv. Jud. page 215. Midd. Free Enqu. 56) whereas from our present gospels it is evident that his ministry continued through several successive passovers; and according to Sir Isaac Newton's computation, (Obs. on Dan. chapter 11, page 159) he died in his 34th year. Yet Clement testifies of himself that he had received his doctrines from several disciples of the chief apostles, who had truly preserved the tradition of the blessed doctrine, as it came directly from the holy apostles Peter, James, and John. But he deals largely in the books prevalent at the time, and now known to be apocryphal and forged. Like Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian and many more, he is fully persuaded of the power of magical incantations, and the power of magicians over demons. Indeed in those days, what the heathens were supposed to perform by magic, the Christians were supposed to perform by means of gifts divinely bestowed on them. Among the gifts thus supernaturally imparted and exercised in Justin Martyr's time, he reckons healing the sick, casting out evil spirits, &c, 1 Jortin's Rem. 307. Clement is also persuaded that the worship of the celestial bodies was ordained by God, as a gradual means of leading the heathen to the knowledge of the true God. For the references in proof of all this, and for a copious analysis of the three books of his pedagogue, I must send the reader to Barbeyrac's chapter on this father, in his treatise so often cited, sur la morale des Peres; and which will supply abundant proofs of the ignorance and imbecility with which Clement treats ethical questions.

TERTULIAN, says Dr. Jortin, had no small share of credulity. He proves that the soul is corporeal though immortal, from the visions of an illuminated sister who had seen a soul. De anima, page 311. He affirms roundly (constat, says he, ethnibus quoque testibus) that a fine city was seen for forty days suspended over Jerusalem; this he considers as a proof that the millennium is at hand; Cont. Marc, iii, page 24. St. John is supposed to have been banished by Domitian, A. D. 94. Not a

likely story at that age. Tertullian (and others after him, on his credit) say that John was put into a vessel of boiling oil! This story St. Jerom also repeats with embellishments of his own. St. John must probably at this time have been near 130 years old, for Jesus Christ would have been 128 at that time. See Leclerc's hist. eccles. page 508. The apostle came out unhurt, says Tertullian! He came out stronger and healthier than he went in, says St. Jerom! Jortin observes that Jerom might have in his thoughts, Eson coming out of Medea's kettle from 7 Ovid. Metam. 288. To believe all Tertullian's falsehoods, it is necessary to adopt his maxim, *Credo quia impossibile est*, and that the true disciples of Christ have no business with curiosity or enquiry, their duty being to believe. *Cum credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere.* De præscr. hæc. § 8.

I omit, on account of their number and their length, all the falsehoods and the follies of this pious father, which Middleton and Barbeyrac have collected. If he could have been defended or excused, Jortin, who was very orthodox, very ingenious, very learned, and full of good taste, would have defended or excused him. To Middleton and Barbeyrac, I refer the reader.

ORIGEN. He denounces second marriages as excluding the parties from the kingdom of God: but as the example of Abraham stood in his way, he says that all the history of that patriarch is to be understood not literally but allegorically. He forbids husbands having any connexion with their wives while pregnant. For the unexampled absurdity of his allegories, see the collection Barbeyrac has made of them in his morale des Peres § 13 et seq.

He declares (see Middleton index sub voce Origen as a general reference) that the Christians of his days could drive away devils, perform cures, and foresee things to come. That the driving away of devils was generally performed by laymen. He allows that there was a demon called Esculapius, very skilful in medicine. He says that the Jews cast out devils by the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; these devils were accustomed to destroy cattle. He cites as genuine, the spurious book, entitled "the Preaching of Peter." He denies the charge of Celsus, that the Christians interpolated the verses of the Sybil; a denial, that involves on his side beyond all doubt a wilful falsehood; see 1 Jortin 182 and 188—217. Justin Martyr also cites the Sybilline verses as genuine in his Cohortatio ad Græcos. Jortin suspects this tract to be spurious, and it would be well for Justin Martyr's character if it were proved so: or even that the pious belief of Isaac Vossius should prove true; which is so curious that I copy it. *Credimus* (says he) *omnes istos libros (Apocryphos) a judæis fuisse compositos DEO IMPELLENTE IPSORUM MENTES ad significandum gentibus Christi adventum. Infinita itaque edidere volumina, partim sub patriarcharum et prophetarum suorum nominibus quales fuere libri qui olim lecti fuere sub nominibus Adami, Abrahami, Moysis, Eliæ, Esaïæ, et Jeremiæ, partim vero sub nominibus illorum quorum magna apud gentes esset existimatio, veluti Hytaspis, Mercuri Trismegisti, Zoroastri, Syballarum, Orpei, Phocyllidæ, et complurium aliorum.* De Sybill. orac. chapter 7.

It would be very difficult indeed to prove that either the Jews or God Almighty had any hand in these pious forgeries, and only an ultra orthodox intellect could have invented such a strange calumny. As to the *Economia* of Origen, and the other pious forgeries of these Christian fathers, I have already noticed them, and refer again to the dissertations of Mosheim, who has collected sufficient proofs of the disgraceful practice.

CYPRIAN, or St. Cyprian, as he is generally called, an African bishop, full of high notions of clerical dominion; remarkable for a stile even more inflated than that of Tertullian, whom he imitates. This godly man put away his wife on turning Christian, that he might not be contaminated with the sensual enjoyments of this world. For a man in full health and vigor to do this (says his biographer Pontius) and to live a life of continence, is truly a signal miracle! Cyprian had a curious method of carrying on his business and his church government. Did he use wine a little too freely at the Eucharist? He was favored with a vision ordering him to mix water with it. Had he to threaten some priest for being too lenient? He has a vision in which he is told how to punish them. Does he wish to reclaim one priest, or appoint another? He has divine communications expressly to the purpose.

In fact, as his very learned but credulous commentator observes, *adeo familiares Cypriano erant hujusmodi visiones, ut disciplinæ etiam ecclesiastæ exercitio illas acceperit, aliasque deinceps expectaret, &c.* Dodwell Dissertat. Cypr. iv. § 30. I fancy the reader, (if his good sense be not overwhelmed by orthodoxy) will agree with me that this lying saint was an egregious sinner, however fashionable his conduct might be, among the pious and venerable fathers of the Christian church. His visions usually took place when he had any point of episcopal authority to carry with the previous consent of his clergy and people: it is useless to debate says he: we have no need of human suffrage, when we are preceded by divine admonitions. Ep. 33. In a time of persecution, Cyprian fled, and pleaded an express revelation for so doing. Yet he exhorts strenuously to Martyrdom; although he complains that many who had been persecuted for religion's sake, had by their conduct disgraced their profession. I have not room for many of his wonderful stories, (inventions) from his magnificent treatise on the lapsed Christians. I refer to Middleton's Free Enquiry, 112 et seq. to 2 Jortin's Rem. on Ecc. Hist. 76, 77, where the reader will find abundance to disgust him, with the conduct, pretensions, declarations, and professions of this dexterous seer of visions, and dreamer of dreams. For his fraudulent application of scripture passages, and his fraudulent interpolations I refer to Barbeyrac.

LACTANTIUS asserts that the Christians of his day could exercise possessed persons and drive away demons. He maintained the genuineness of the Sybilline oracles. He urges necromancy as a proof of the immortality of the soul. He argues against the right of self defence, and the resistance of injuries: against the use of arms. Against the right to accuse any one of a capital crime. He exclaims also against foreign commerce; against taking interest for money. See Barbeyrac and Middleton.

ATHANASIUS was one of the first who introduced monks into Italy. He wrote a life of the monk St. Anthony; and says in the preface that he had inserted nothing therein that he did not know to be true, having seen the saint himself, or having heard it from one who had long ministered to him, and poured water on his hands. For the character of this book of lies, I refer to Middleton Free Enq. 147, and to 2 Jortin's Rem. 85, who have given specimens of the figments of this impudent predecessor of Baron Munchausen.

GREGORY of Nyssa published a life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, or the wonder worker, after the model of Athanasius's life of St. Anthony.

But I am weary of a continual reference to the works that expose this mass of folly and fraud; where sometimes the one predominates, sometimes the other; and which I regret to say characterizes so peculiarly the Christian authors of the times nearest to the purest period of the Christian church, if indeed such a period can really be found. I shall therefore now confine myself to Eusebius, Jerom, and St. Austin or Augustine; and when I have done with these, the reader will have before him some faithful characteristic traits by which he may judge of the characters of the writings and the writers, whose evidence alone is the basis on which the authenticity of our new testament rests.

EUSEBIUS is the principal author for ecclesiastical history, one of the most zealous of the Christian fathers, and the writer on whom Christian divines generally rely. Jones and Lardner do not seem to entertain a doubt of any thing that Eusebius asserts. Indeed with all his learning, his indefatigable industry, his honest zeal, and his good intentions, I know not a more credulous critic than Lardner. His Christian prejudices blind him in every page, and *it seems, it is likely, it is probable, we may conclude, no doubt, it is reasonable to suppose*, and similar expressions, stand incessantly in the place of fact and argument when these are not at hand.

To Eusebius we are obliged for the first regular defence and recommendation of *saint worship*. 2 Jortin Rem. 157—160. To Eusebius we are indebted for the interpolated passage in Josephus: for the forged correspondence between Jesus Christ and Abgarus of Edissa: for the Christian legion of Apollinaris; and as I suspect for many other forgeries. I will not dwell on the many wonderful and miraculous stories he relates, (see Middl. Free Enq. 127 et seq.) but come to the point at once—he was a forger on principle and by profession.

He acknowledges that he purposely concealed the dissensions and wickedness of the Christians and martyrs: nay he goes so far (Præp. evang. lib. 1, page 11) as to assert, that since the coming of Christ, there have been no wars, or tyrants, or cannibals, or sodomites, or persons committing incest, or savages destroying their parents, &c. The title of chapter 2 of book 12 of his evangelical preparation, is, "*how it may be proper to use FALSEHOOD as a medicine, and for the benefit of those who require to be deceived.*" He defends this by the example of Plato, and the writers of the old testament. See Gibbon's misc. works, 618. I make no remark on this for the present: but I proceed to his worthy imitator, St. Hieronymus Jerom.

JEROM was a zealous admirer and promoter of the monkish life ; and for the sake of advancing its credit in the world, he wrote the lives of two celebrated monks, St. Paul and St. Hilarion : in which, after having invoked the same holy spirit which inspired these monks, to inspire him also with language equal to the wondrous acts he was about to relate, he has inserted a number of tales and miracles so grossly fabulous, as not to admit *the least doubt* of their being absolute forgeries. The life of Paul was published first: and as we learn from Jerom himself (in the preface to the life of Hilarion) was treated as a mere fable by the free-thinkers or Scyllæan dogs, as he calls them, of those days.

Nor is it considered at this day in any other character, or mentioned by the learned for any other reason, than as a proof of that passion for fiction and imposture, which (as Dodwell says in his dissertation on Irenæus) possessed and actuated the fathers of the fourth century. See Midd. Free Enq. postscript cxxx. Dodwell is far from being alone in that remark, as I have already shewn. Mosheim in his Ecc. Hist. Cent. iv. part 2, chapter 3, states it as a maxim adopted among the fathers of the church, that *it is an act of virtue to deceive and lie for the interests of the church*. Bishop Heliodorus in his romance of Theagnes and Chariclea Æthiop. lib. 1, insinuates the same maxim. "*For a falsehood is a good thing when it aids the speaker and does no injury to the hearer.*"

Let us however proceed to Jerom's deliberate defence of this practice. "In like manner, O most learned men, we have learned in the schools those maxims of Aristotle deduced from the precepts of Gorgias, that there are several methods of discussion ; and among others, one mode of writing is *gymnastically*, another *dogmatically*. In the first, the disputation is vague ; and in replying to your adversary, you sometimes say one thing, sometimes another. You use arguments without restraint, you say one thing and you think another ; you shew him bread, and you conceal a stone. In the other kind of disputation you must bear an open front and be ingenious." After alleging to this purpose the examples of the Greek and Roman orators and philosophers, St. Jerom goes on to the apologists of Christianity. "Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, Apollinaris, have written much against Celsus and Porphyry, Consider the nature of the arguments they use, and what slippery problems they employ to overturn the inventions of the devil. How they are compelled in replying to the Pagans, to urge, not what they believe themselves, but what is necessary to their cause. I do not here instance the Latin fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, Minucius, Victorinus, Lactantius, Hilarius, lest I should be suspected rather of blaming their practices, than defending my own. But I will produce the example of the apostle Paul, whom I never peruse without thinking that I hear his thunderings rather than read his words. Consult his epistles particularly to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, where he disputes continually. You will see in the proofs he borrows from the old testament, with what address, what dissimulation he manages his subject. He deals in words that seem so simple, that you would rather say that it was some ignorant countryman who used them, some innocent person equally unskilled to lay a snare or to avoid one : but on whatever side you turn your eyes,

you see nothing but thunderbolts. He seems embarrassed how to defend his cause; he seizes every thing that falls in his way. He turns his back that he may conquer; he makes semblance of flight to worry his antagonist. Let us charge this upon him as a crime, and say to him, *the testimonies you have used against the Jews and other heretics, have one signification in their original place, and another in your writings. We see here examples forcibly pressed into the service, which aid you in gaining a victory, but have no force in the books from whence you take them.* Would not the apostle address us like our Saviour? We speak one thing abroad, another at home. The crowd hear our parables; the disciples our truth. Our Saviour proposes questions to the Pharisees but he resolves none. It is one thing to teach a disciple, another to confute an adversary."

Such is the reasoning of Jerom in his Apolog. pro lib. adv. Jovin. to which we may add epist. 89 ad. Pommach. We find that in using these base artifices, he only followed the practices of the fathers who preceded him. In another passage of the same apology, he says "it is a pretty thing indeed to advise me to strike so as to give an advantage to my enemy. To tell me I must conquer by main force and not by stratagem. Is not the great art of fighting, to menace one place, and strike another?"

He mentions a silly story of the Christians at Jerusalem, who used to show in the ruins of the temple, certain stones of a reddish color, which they pretended to have been stained by the blood of Zacharias, the son of Baraccbias, who was slain between the temple and the altar. "I do not find fault (says he) with an error which proceeds from a hatred toward the Jews, and a pious zeal for the Christian faith." Oper. tom. 4, page 113.

It is unnecessary to multiply proofs against these saints. Their principles and practices are well calculated to tempt all honest men to conclude, that the spirit of Christianity, as it was known, received, taught, and exemplified in the earliest ages of its history, from the close of the first to the close of the fourth century, was strongly connected with ignorance, credulity, superstition, fraud, forgery and imposture. Nor have these marks and characters of the spirit of Christianity been entirely omitted in modern times. Witness the Episcopalian forgeries and mistranslations: the pious stories of the priests of the Romish church; and the inveterate bigotry and intolerance that has always characterized the devoted followers of St. Dominic and John Calvin.

PHILO VERITAS.

SPIRITUAL EXISTENCES.

No. VI.

Mr. Editor—My remarks have heretofore been confined to the confutation of arguments upon which theism is established. I shall now enter upon the evidences by which it is destroyed.

It is a very singular characteristic in man, that he oftentimes overlooks the most simple and familiar facts, not only in metaphysics but also in mechanics, and substitutes subtle and abstruse reasonings and experiments, to arrive at simple truths. It is not so much that man is

deficient in knowledge, that he forms wrong opinions, but rather that he does not apply the knowledge which he does possess, to practical purposes.

Every man that is acquainted with the laws and operations of Nature, knows that there can be no animate existences without organization. Materialists and immaterialists, physicians and metaphysicians, all admit the force of this fact—the thing is evident from our knowledge of animate and inanimate existences. We know that all animate existences are organized, and that all inanimate existences are unorganized. We know that to be animate requires to be organized, and that to be inanimate requires to be unorganized; for the moment a perfect organization is effected, an animate existence is created. All machines or organizations may be said to be perfect; firstly, in which the means are adapted to the ends; and secondly, in which the intended purposes are effected. With regard to the first principle, all animate existences are perfect illustrations; but as we are unacquainted with the intended purpose (which implies a creator) of animal beings, we are unable to say whether with regard to the second principle, they are perfect organizations. (According to the worshippers and declarations of the *perfect God*, animate existences do not work according to design; therefore they are imperfect organizations, and their creator, *an ignoramus*.) This point being settled by common consent, all that is now necessary to bring it to a practical bearing upon the question before us, will be to establish another principle of Nature, quite as evident as this; to wit, that to be organized renders necessary materiality, and a great degree of the attraction of cohesion.

Two bodies cannot act upon each other without an intermediate connexion. The mind could not operate upon the different members of the body if there were no connexions, or chains of communication from the one to the other; and the particles of matter which compose these connecting organs, could not adhere to each other, if there was not a mutual attraction between them. An organization, therefore, which emphatically requires a firm relative connexion between its individual members, and between the particles of which those members are formed, could not exist, unless it were capable of very great resistance. We see throughout the organization of man a perfect harmony of action; the different members governed by mutual interest, and acting by mutual aid; all receiving force, energy and ability, from one common source, the mind; and the whole rendered capable of action by the attraction of cohesion, which unites the one with the other, and each with itself. Man, with all the ingenuity of his construction, would be unable to act (action implies the exercise of power) if the adhesion of his organs was not more powerful than the laws of gravitation and inertia which they are to overcome. The application of force, the only means by which action can be produced, presupposes the existence of an active power operating upon other bodies; and the reduction of this application of force to a system of action, or to make it subservient to the will of a being, presupposes organization.

It is a principle in natural philosophy, that a weaker force cannot overcome a stronger, but is overcome. Example—two bodies of diffe-

rent powers of attraction (let it be here understood that a superior power of attraction or gravitation, implies also a superior quantity of matter) are suspended in the air so as to act upon each other; the inferior body, being also the weaker, is drawn farther than the superior one, to effect a union. Again, if a ball be placed upon the ground, and attached to it a cord to raise it; if the particles forming the cord be not sufficiently adhesive to overcome the attraction which attaches the ball to the earth, must eventually separate. Lastly, if two cords of unequal strength be tied together, and a force be applied to their extremes to separate them, the weaker will necessarily break. Application—if the organs which execute the volitions of the mind, were not sufficiently cohesive to resist and overcome exterior force and inertia, the volitions of the mind would be ineffectual; the mind might will as much as it would if its agents were important, so would also be its volitions. If the particles of matter of which the executive organs are formed, are not as adhesive as the particles of which a cord are formed, they will be unable to break it; and if the organs are not sufficiently strong to overcome the gravitation which keeps a stone to the earth, they will be unable to raise it. By these illustrations we learn that the strength or power of all organized beings must be superior to the power it is acting against, to overcome it; and that it is not the real, but the comparative weakness that is defeated, and the comparative strength which conquers. We are now to see if spiritual, invisible matter can be organized.

Natural philosophy teaches us that solids alone are capable of resisting gravitation; and that all solids are perceptible to the touch and sight; when we speak of bodies resisting gravitation, we wish to be understood, to mean bodies whose attraction of cohesion is superior to the attraction of gravitation. Suppose it were possible to form an organized being of ice, capable of volition and action, then admit a sufficient degree of heat to dissolve the ice; the adhesion of the particles of ice which formed the organs, will be disunited, and the whole fall into one incoherent, inert fluid mass. But why is this? Why because fluids of any kind, have not sufficient attraction of cohesion to resist gravitation, or to hold itself together.

If then material fluids are incapable of organization, how much less do immaterial fluids, if I may be allowed the expression, possess that ability! Immateriality implies something void of matter; now is it not self evident, that as matter is alone the seat of attraction, or in other words, that as attraction of cohesion is a property of matter alone, and cannot exist without it, things that are immaterial (a contradiction in terms) cannot possess the attraction of cohesion, and consequently cannot be organized. But let us admit of an immaterial organization, that we may see how it will act. The organs are formed of a substance that does not possess cohesion of particles; a cord is wanting to be broke, which possesses a very strong cohesion of parts; according to the axiom previously laid down, the stronger will resist and conquer the weaker; the cord will separate the organs by not yielding itself. A weight is required to be raised from the ground; immateriality applies his hand, which not adhering sufficiently to the other organs as to overcome the gravitation, the attempt fails and he looses his hand in the effort.

Hence we are to conclude that spiritual organizations cannot exist, as being at variance with every law of Nature; and consequently the existence of a God is altogether hypothetical and unfounded.

CATO.

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 1829.

NEW ARRANGEMENT.

In compliance with the wishes of a considerable number of our subscribers, we have concluded on introducing into the *Correspondent* a greater variety of topics than usually occupy its pages.

Hitherto, we have confined ourselves chiefly to *theological* discussions; and in the *five* volumes of our work now before the public will, probably, be found nearly all the argument, pro and con, that can be advanced on this subject. To confine ourselves, therefore, to this course, would only be to repeat, perhaps in a new dress or form, what we or our correspondents have already advanced; whereas, by resorting to the fields of natural philosophy, literature, and the common occurrences of life, much novel matter might be gleaned materially conducive to the advancement of truth. Not that we intend in any way to abandon liberal principles, or to relax in our efforts to overthrow superstition. Convinced as we are by continued experience, that a belief in supernaturals is the true source of all the misery which afflicts the human family, its entire subversion shall always be our principal aim. The introduction of other topics, will be auxiliary to this important end; and by this combination of instruction and rational amusement, we hope to be able to render our journal more extensively useful and interesting.

To effect the object contemplated, our paper will be *enlarged* so as to embrace about one third more matter than it contains at present; and as this will considerably increase the expense of publication, the subscription will be necessarily raised from \$3 to \$4 per annum. Subscribers who have already settled for the current year, and who may wish to continue under the proposed arrangement, will thus have \$1 to pay, to entitle them to receive vol. 1 of the new series.

The losses we have sustained by defaulters, renders it imperative that no departure in future should take place from our original conditions. Those, therefore, who may have neglected at the close of the present volume (of which only *two* numbers remain to be printed) to pay up their arrears, will be considered as having discontinued the paper.

A few *complete* sets of the *Correspondent*, making *five* handsome volumes, 8vo. may still be had at the original subscription price, \$ 1.50 a volume. The following are also for sale at the office of the Correspondent.

Liberal Tracts, from No. 1 to 8, inclusive, \$1 for 1000 pages.

Ecce Homo! or, a Critical Enquiry into the history of Jesus of Nazareth; 12mo. bds. 75 cents; bound and gilt, \$1.

Volney's Ruins of Empires; with the Law of Nature; a new translation, with plates, large edition bound and gilt, \$1.25.

The God of the Jews and Christians; embellished with a correct likeness, 25 cents.

View of the Metaphysical and Physiological Arguments in Favor of Materialism, 25 cents.

The Scripture Doctrine of Materialism, 25 cents.

The Elements of Modern Materialism. By Charles Knowlton, M. D. 8vo. bound, \$ 1.50.

* * In the press, and shortly will be published, an essay on *the Right of Free Discussion*, from the pen of one of the ablest philosophical writers in this country. It will extend to about 50 pages, 12mo. and be sold at 25 cents.

Those taking quantities of the above publications will be allowed a liberal discount.

Rapid advance of liberal principles.—While the superstitionists are "moving heaven and earth" to prevent the downfall of their gainful system, liberal principles are moving with a rapidity unexampled at any former period. Among the German lutherans of Pennsylvania, amounting to 300,000 persons, the spirit of *free enquiry* has so widely diffused itself, that this vast portion of the population of that state has almost to a man recently and openly declared against the schemes of the priesthood to perpetuate mental delusion. Numerous public meetings have been held in towns within 100 miles of Philadelphia, which, as admitted in the New-York Observer, were attended by "men of wealth, by men in public office, nay, by professors of religion, by elders of churches, who have been encouraged to do so by their pastors," at which energetic resolutions were unanimously passed against bible and missionary societies, and against all those religious associations for the purpose of raising money, by which this country is now inundated. The following, which were adopted in Heidleberg township. Berks county, on the 21st ult., express pretty fully the sentiments of the German lutherans in Pennsylvania:—

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, the institution of Bible and Missionary Societies, Theological Seminaries and Sunday School Unions, are works of supererogation, considered in reference to the wants and welfare of the people; that they are designed to elevate and sustain the authority of the priesthood, and so considered, are dangerous to the liberties of the people, and that we will not assist in maintaining clergymen who advocate them, or are concerned in their support.

Resolved, That hereafter we will receive no preacher into our congregation who is an adherent or supporter of any Theological Seminary, of the Sunday School Union, or the Bible, Missionary, Tract, or any other similar Societies, or who is engaged in distributing any so called religious papers or magazines, because we sincerely believe those institutions have been introduced for no other purpose than to collect large sums of money, which is to be applied towards erecting an influence and power of the clergy over the people, and consequently may eventually lead to the destruction of our civil and religious liberties.

Resolved, That it is our sincere opinion that all those persons who so conspicuously disseminate principles so dangerous in their consequences, are either hypocrites, seeking their own aggrandizement, or deluded fanatics, whose blindness seeks to involve twelve millions of free and happy people between the fangs of an overreaching and ambitious priesthood.

Resolved, That we view those arrogant and haughty beggars, who, in imported broad cloths, strut about our country, distributing Tracts and asking money for missionary purposes, as a set of impostors, too lazy to earn, by the sweat of their brow, the food that sustains them.

Resolved, That we are as we have been, ever ready to reward upright and unassuming ministers for their services and to render their stay among us as agreeable as cir-

circumstances will allow; with this proviso, however, that they remain free and independent from all connexion with those Societies, whose ostensible object may seem laudable, but whose intentions are the promotion of themselves and the slavery of the people.

We have the best reasons for believing, that opinions, similar to those expressed in the above resolutions, are entertained by nine-tenths of the people of the United States, who are only prevented from avowing their sentiments by the influence of the clerical order. As this influence, however, is now on the wane, we may naturally expect that the liberal minded will become more fearless, and that moral courage, the want of which we have had so much reason to deplore, will be cherished by every one who considers free discussion as the only means of promoting mental freedom.

A Card.—Mr. Schultz, a *high priest of theism*, presents his compliments to Mr. George Houston, *high priest of DEISM*, and informs him, that Mr. S. is preparing an amicable theological challenge for that trinity of *high priests of ATHEISM and DEISM*, Messrs. Owen, Houston, and Wright; and soon will be forwarded to the "Correspondent," for the benefit of all our brother "INFIDELS." It will be in the form of a review of the merits of atheism, deism, theism; and will not occupy more than about one sheet of letter paper. Your brother "infidel."

C. SCHULTZ.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Voltaire.—When Voltaire entered life, Louis XIV. was all devotion and exclusive *Madame Maintenon*, and as his glory, as it was called, had exceedingly abated, the youth of his dominion were beginning to look for other models and manners. Still, a portion of this well assorted decency and libertinism abounded; and the first thing we hear of the education of Voltaire is, that a very agreeable Abbe—the abbe Chateaufeuf—taught him to repeat the fables of La Fontaine, and a sceptical poem of J. B. Rousseau, as soon as he could speak; and at the age of fifteen introduced him to the celebrated Ninon de L'Enclos, the said Abbe having been the last of the one hundred and fifty of her lovers. Now all this was mere accident or routine in France, and yet there are people who will dwell on the levity and libertinism of Voltaire, and its desperate consequences, who would not hazard a word upon the dissolute framework of the society which formed him, because that would show at once both the sources of his feelings and of the general disorder which engendered the revolution.

The boasted reign of Louis, in fact, was signalized by the most flagitious immorality from the court downwards, which immorality was very poorly covered towards the close by a species of factitious devotion, which only added to the disgust of those who penetrated beyond the surface. The morals of the Regency were a little better or a little worse, just as the reader may be disposed to prefer impudence or hypocrisy—unblushing vice, or "the homage which vice pays to virtue." A great and ac-

tive party in this country prefer the *homage*—the French plate, which, as Joseph Surface says, pays no tax—to the real silver, all to nothing ; and unhappily the age takes both its hue and its appellation from this preference. Letting this pass, it is certain that a brilliant, highly-gifted, and more than commonly vivacious young man, like Voltaire, who moved in the high tide of Parisian society, must necessarily be imbued with the levity and laxity that on every side surrounded him, and which has rendered the period in question proverbial for profligacy and debauchery. This is not observed in defence of the moral defects of Voltaire, or of any one else, but in answer to those who expect the virtues of a sage from the education of an Alcibiades. His youthful career seems to have been precisely that of other young men of his age and station in the French metropolis, neither better nor worse ; and it is scarcely necessary to prove the tinge which such a state of society must bestow upon every character, however intellectually gifted, which is formed in the midst of it.

So much as to a certain license in respect to gallantry and sexual matters, which, however, may be very briefly dismissed, as Voltaire was by no means a distinguished offender in that way. The remark is made in relation rather to the literary freedom which this kind of early experience is likely to create, and to certain occasionally offences *contra bonos mores* which must be expected from a writer, who has thus commenced as a man. But even after including La Pucelle, these are not very numerous, besides being for the most part admirably redeemed by the wit and severity that accompany them, which are generally turned against the detestable vice of hypocrisy, and in exposition of the personal failings of fanatics or their idols, who never either spare the weak opponent or pardon the strong one. And after all, Voltaire has not proceeded much beyond Pope, and not near so far as a great number of English writers of the age which immediately preceded him.

One or two other faults of this extraordinary man, which were equally the social product of Parisian habits and manners, are with more difficulty palliated. The principal of these was the practice of a species of *persiflage*, almost amounting to falsehood. Reference is not made to the tergiversation which continental despotism certainly causes, and almost excuses ; but to the literary and bookselling squabbles, the controversial encounters, and the personal disputes, in which a genius of the constitutional temperament of Voltaire is of necessity almost incessantly involved. No involuntary complacency with the exuberance of his wit ; no admiration of his great and varied intellectuality and copious information ; and, more than all, no respect for the persevering humanity with which he assailed the deadly superstitions of his country, and threw himself between the whole tribe of rancorous and persecuting bigots, who howl and hunt down their victims like wolves,—ought to operate against an unequivocal condemnation of the freedom which he would often take with the exact truth, when his fears were excited, his animosity roused, or his interests assailed. His astonishing fertility was a pander to this failing so common to wits, who, in the rapid evolution and facility of their combinations, can seldom wait for positive correctness, and who are still seldomer disposed to sacrifice a happy thought to extreme accuracy or a refined sense of justice.

Happily for the character of Voltaire, in a comparative point of view, he is only distinguished in his personal controversies by the tremendous power of his ridicule; for we fear that its occasional misapplication or unfairness is common to most literary belligerents. It is certain at least that Pope, in his *Dunciad*, was any thing but free from it; and we fear that it is a general characteristic. Some circumstances are mentioned of Voltaire, in regard to his bargains with booksellers, which, as represented, were manœuvring and discreditable; but on looking to evidence, little has been proved beyond a very natural desire to anticipate the piracies, which were eternally taking place, of works in a language which was so generally understood all over the Continent. That he was tenacious both of his property and reputation is certain; and, strange to say, he knew how to speculate in money-getting as well as in literature: but, at the same time, it is equally evident that he was generous, and knew both how to give and to expend. His fortune was ample, and he very honourably diffused it.

It has already been observed, that Voltaire was altogether a Frenchman, and the remark will be found just, whether applied to the character of the man or of the genius. By increasing to intensity the national characteristics, social, constitutional, and mental, we create a Voltaire. These are gaiety, facility, address, a tendency to wit, railery, and equivocation; light, quick, and spontaneous feelings of humanity, which may be occasionally worked up into enthusiasm; vanity, irascibility, very slipshod morality in respect to points which grave people are apt to deem of the first consequence; social insincerity, and a predominant spirit of intrigue. Such were the generalities of the French character in the days of Voltaire; and multiply them by his capacity and acquirement, and we get at the solid contents of his own. It is therefore especially inconsistent to discover such excellence and virtue of the old French regime, and especially in the reign of Louis XIV. and to find so much fault with the *tout ensemble* of Voltaire; for both his good and his bad qualities were the natural growth of the period. The application of the former is indeed another affair, and stands over for subsequent observation; but in concluding that which it is to be hoped will be deemed a candid admission of the failings as well as the merits of a favorite author, it is necessary to rescue him from inconsistent attack. There is a tribe of political and religious critics, who will rail against the personal vices of Voltaire, while they countenance the wretched government and social condition which rendered them nearly those of the French people at large,—gentry, who lift up their hands and eyes at *La Pucelle*, but who never talk of the grave and multiplied adulteries of Louis le Grand, or of the *Parc aux Cerfs* of his successor;—of the dissolute gallantries, amounting almost to promiscuous intercourse, of the entire body of the nobility;—of the nauseous depravity of the churchmen;—or of the gross and insolent oppression and demoralization of the people by the whole. Like that silly old gentlewoman, Madame de Genlis, they prate as eloquently as parrots about those *wicked philosophers*, and speak of the ejectment of half a million of subjects by the god-like Louis, and the murder, rape, ravishment, and dragooning of the protestants which preceded and

followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, as the slightest of all possible drawbacks in that very kingly character.

Having briefly dismissed what may be denominated the private and personal character of Voltaire, the far more important consideration of his public merits and defaults must necessarily follow. Has the application of his extraordinary talents been serviceable or disserviceable to mankind? Was the state of things which he contributed so much to overthrow, such as ought to remain? Or, was there any other mode of successfully assailing it than the one which he adopted,—that of reducing it into contempt? Suppose the quality of that which was attacked be first stated, and then the propriety and legitimacy of the weapons employed by Voltaire.

The most detestable and odious of all political sins is, indisputably, religious persecution; and by that execrable union of kingcraft and priestcraft which assumes a sway over volition itself, was this sin unsparingly committed during the whole of the reign of Louis XIV. This leads at once to the source of the early predispositions of Voltaire, and of the honorable enthusiasm which colored nearly the whole of his long life. By accident, carelessness, or indifference, he was very early allowed to imbibe a large portion of philosophical scepticism, which no after education (and he was subsequently educated by Jesuits) could remove. It is not intended either to applaud or lament this fact, but simply as a fact to produce it, for the purpose of asking what was more natural for a brilliant, ardent, and vivacious young man, thus early *vaccinated*—if the figure be allowable—against the *small-pox of fanaticism and superstition* so prevalent in his country, and born during a reign which revoked the Edict of Nantz, and expatriated half a million of peaceable subjects? In what way did his most Christian Majesty, the magnificent Louis, signalize that part of his kingly career which immediately preceded the birth of Voltaire? In the famous Dragonades, which a rude and licentious soldiery were encouraged in every excess of cruelty and outrage, because, to use the language of the Minister Louvois, “his Majesty was desirous that the heaviest penalties should be put in force against those who are not willing to embrace his religion; and those who have the *false glory* to remain longest firm in their opinions, must be driven to the last extremities.”

It is impossible to enter into detail, or sources exist from which monstrous and mournful particulars might be extracted; but the general fact is all that is necessary in this place. It will therefore suffice to repeat, that at length the Edict of Nantz was formally repealed, protestants refused liberty of conscience, their temples demolished, their children torn from them, and, to crown all, attempts were even made to impede their emigration. They were to be inclosed like wild beasts, and hunted down at leisure. Matrons were turned over to ruffians to be dishonored, virgins to be deflowered. The *Guidon* of the commander in chief was one of the miscreants most employed in these execrable outrages; and when the general himself failed to persuade a female to give up her religion, his phrase was, I must hand you over to *Monsieur mon Guidon*; which pleasantry formed part of the small talk and delicate raillery among the courtiers of both sexes at Versailles. The *ma-*

ternal Madame de Sevigne could even sport with the sufferings of wretches who gloried in opposite religious opinions to those of the King. What a whitened sepulchre was such a court, burlesquing religion, aping devotion, and grinning with horrible levity at the extreme of conscientious human suffering!

About this time, too, gentle reader, the worthy Stuarts, Charles and James, the second of the names, were enacting a similar sort of pater-nity in Scotland; but happily Scotland was not France, nor England passive obedient.

Such were the facts and horrors which must, in the first instance, have encountered and confirmed the incipient scepticism of Voltaire. What calm man, of any or of no religion, can now hear of them without shuddering and execration? and what such feel now, it is reasonable to suppose that a mind predisposed like that of Voltaire must have felt then. It is evident that, from his earliest manhood, he declared war against the whole fabric of priestcraft and superstition, from which such mighty mischiefs emanated. Nor was the tragedy of these consequences, although bloody, unnatural, oppressive and violent, all. Another equally great, if less deplorable folly, was in full play during the last years of the life of Louis, and consequently of the youth of Voltaire, which, by a young man so well prepared to laugh and prone to raillery, must have been regarded as an amusing farce. Allusion is here made to the famous controversy which divided all France, about the disputed propositions of Jansenius, and the acceptation of the famous bull *Unigenitus*—that blessed proof of the dotage of the priest-led Louis, and of the power and malignity of his leader, the Jesuit Le Tellier. All the world, to be sure, began at last to laugh at those Jesuitical gambols, as well as Voltaire, because all the world began to find out that Louis had for some time become little more than a great Crowned Mask, behind which priestcraft, intrigue, and bigotry, prepared and *be-Maintenon'd* the business of the state. But such was the combination of the horrible and ridiculous which indisputably encountered the youth of Voltaire; and whether for invective, for argument, or for jibe, it is impossible that an enemy to superstition, fanaticism, and priestly demonation, with their attendant horrors of cruelty, intolerance, and persecution, who was at the same time a poet, wit, satirist, and philosopher, could be more irresistibly urged into a warfare which was to distinguish the whole of a long future life.

To be continued.

Controversy.—It seems to be too general a principle with controversialists, that all weapons are fair, until used against themselves. This remark is peculiarly applicable to religious controversy. Nothing can exceed the fury with which one sect abuses another for the use of sarcasm and ridicule—except the freedom with which itself employs the same auxiliaries. It is observable too, that the most cowardly party is the first both to employ and to exclaim against certain modes of hostility; just as when two ragged urchins fight in the street, the least valiant commences kicking, scratching, and pinching, very fiercely; but the

moment his antagonist begins to retaliate, the aggressor roars out "foul!" and calls upon the bystanders to interfere in his behalf.

The orthodox in faith have been long famous for denouncing, with affected innocence, the use by the dissidents of any thing but "fair argument" in controversy; but they have at the same time taken religious care to debar themselves from no means, fair or not, of enforcing their own doctrines. Voltaire's wit, Bayle's innuendo, Paine's vituperation, have been styled dishonest and scandalous; as if infidelity had not been abused and ridiculed by the advocates of established faith—aye, even by the most learned and illustrious writers among the clergy!

Angels.—If we examine history for the character of an angel, (which, by the by is only to be found in the history called *sacred*,) we shall find that all supernatural beings, instead of bringing *good tidings of great joy*, have been the harbingers of misery and desolation to us poor mortals! And the description given of them, in the *sacred* history, proves them to be a fornicating, and most cruel race of monsters. The first time which we read of one, we find him armed with a *flaming sword*; standing sentinel, over a tree, against two poor naked and defenseless mortals, lest they should pluck its life preserving fruit, and live for ever! *Quere*; how many poor birds were slain, in their attempts to pick from this tree? Or were there no birds, caterpillars, or insects, in those days, which might have stolen a bit, and so have become immortal? Perhaps, you will say, that, they were all *inspired* with good manners, by the holy ghost, like the wild colt upon which Jesus rode! But, I never could learn, what become of this strange being with his *flaming sword*! Is he and the tree there still? If not, when, and where did he go with it? as we hear no more of him nor his tree ever after. Surely God did not destroy *them* with every *living substance*, when he opened the *windows* of heaven, and deluged the whole earth!

The human mind can only be led into error when renouncing the evidence of its senses; it suffers itself to be guided by enthusiasm and by authority.

Free Press Association.—The lectures on *theological* and *philosophical* subjects, will be resumed, at the Bowery Long Room, opposite the theatre, on Sunday evening, the 12th of July, at 8 o'clock, and be continued every Sunday evening at the same hour during the warm weather.

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